

Am I discontent with what belongs to me?  
Do I crave something better, different, or more than what God has given me?  
Do I seek to satisfy the desires and appetites of my flesh at the expense of the well-being of others?  
Do I resent or envy those who have what I do not?

#### The Tenth Commandment

***You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour.***

#### What does this mean?

***We should fear and love God so that we do not entice or force away our neighbor's wife, workers, or animals, or turn them against him, but urge them to stay and do their duty.***

Am I discontent with the spouse, family, vocation, job, or employees the Lord has given me?  
Have I done anything to break up a friendship or marriage?  
Have I encouraged someone to be unfaithful to spouse, family, vocation, job, or employees?  
Am I contentious, or have I encouraged disharmony in my congregation, family, or workplace?  
Am I manipulative or controlling?  
Have I done all I can to mend or strengthen broken relationships?

#### A GUIDE TO PROPER PREPARATION FOR CONFESSION & EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE



*The prophet Nathan confronts King David with his sin.*

(Reprinted from The Pastoral Care Companion with additional notes by Rev. Gregory C. Johnson)  
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## PREPARATION FOR CONFESSION

"Confession has two parts: first, that we confess our sins, and second, that we receive absolution, that is, forgiveness, from the pastor as from God Himself" (Small Catechism). Confession may be preceded by a candid examination of one's actions, motives, and nature (1 Cor. 11:28). This examination leads the penitent to speak the truth before the Lord. Like a mirror, these questions are designed to reflect the truth about one's sin in the light of the Law (James 1:22–25). They expose not merely sins, but that "by nature [we] do not possess true fear of God and true faith in God" (AC II, 2). In this way, they encourage serious, thoughtful, and truthful self-examination so that the Christian may heartily and sincerely confess, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner" (Luke 18:13). Not all questions may apply every time, nor are they exhaustive. Absolution strengthens the faith of the penitent, comforts the conscience, and gives courage to confess sins and sinfulness. Most importantly, it declares that the Lord keeps no record of sin, that there is forgiveness with Him, that He removes our transgressions from us and remembers our sin no more (Ps. 130:3–4; 103:12; Jer. 31:34).

## REFLECTION ON THE COMMANDMENTS

### The First Commandment

***You shall have no other gods.***

What does this mean?

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Do I give generously, or am I selfish, stingy, and greedy with my time and money?

Am I unfaithful to the responsibilities of my vocation?

### The Eighth Commandment

***You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.***

What does this mean?

***We should fear and love God so that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, slander him, or hurt his reputation, but defend him, speak well of him, and explain everything in the kindest way.***

Do I gossip, listen to rumors, or take pleasure in talking about the faults or mistakes of anyone?

Do I defend others against false accusations?

Do I judge others without the authority to do so?

Do I speak the truth in love, trying at all times to explain everything in the best possible way?

### The Ninth Commandment

***You shall not covet your neighbor's house.***

What does this mean?

***We should fear and love God so that we do not scheme to get our neighbor's inheritance or house, or get it in a way which only appears right, but help and be of service to him in keeping it.***

## The Sixth Commandment

***You shall not commit adultery.***

**What does this mean?**

***We should fear and love God so that we lead a sexually pure and decent life in what we say and do, and husband and wife love and honor each other.***

Am I in a sexual relationship with someone other than my spouse?

Do I look at others lustfully and thereby commit adultery with them in my heart?

Do I give myself freely and selflessly to my spouse?

Do I dishonor marriage by ridicule or divorce?

Do I engage in any form of sexual immorality?

## The Seventh Commandment

***You shall not steal.***

**What does this mean?**

***We should fear and love God so that we do not take our neighbor's money or possessions, or get them in any dishonest way, but help him to improve and protect his possessions and income.***

Do I cheat or otherwise seek to get what I have not earned?

Do I take care of what I have, pay what I owe, return what I borrow, and respect other people's property?

***We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.***

In what or whom do I trust above all else?

In what or whom do I trust most for financial security, physical safety, or emotional support?

Do I fear God's wrath, avoiding every sin?

Is my love for and trust in God evident in my daily living?

Do I expect only good from God in every situation, or do I worry, doubt, complain, or feel unfairly treated when things go wrong?

Do I withhold from God what is rightfully His?

## The Second Commandment

***You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.***

**What does this mean?**

***We should fear and love God so that we do not curse, swear, use satanic arts, lie, or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.***

Is the Lord's Word evident in my daily speech and conduct, or do I curse, speak carelessly, or misuse God's name?

Do I keep all the vows I have made in the Lord's name, such as confirmation, marriage, or legal vows, etc.?

Am I diligent and sincere in my prayers, or have I been lazy, bored, or distracted? Do I trust that the Lord God will answer them according to His good and gracious will?

### The Third Commandment

***Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.***

**What does this mean?**

***We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it.***

Do I despise the Word by neglect or by paying little or no attention when it is read or preached?

Do I attend the Church's worship faithfully, or do I attend sporadically because I prefer to be elsewhere?

Do I pray for my pastor and other church workers and support their efforts in service to the Word?

### The Fourth Commandment

***Honour your father and your mother.***

**What does this mean?**

***We should fear and love God so that we do not despise or anger our parents and other authorities, but honor them, serve and obey them, love and cherish them.***

Do I honor my father and mother, and other authorities, such as teachers, employers, supervisors, governmental leaders, and pastors, receiving them as gifts that God has put in authority over me?

Have I been angry, stubborn, or disrespectful toward those in authority over me?

Do I obey all the laws of the city, state, and country?

Do I faithfully represent God the Father in disciplining, caring for, and catechizing my children?

Do I exasperate my children, or do I bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord?

Am I threatening, abusive, or overbearing to others in my household or workplace?

### The Fifth Commandment

***You shall not murder.***

**What does this mean?**

***We should fear and love God so that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and support him in every physical need.***

Have I unjustly taken the life of anyone, born or unborn?

Do I treat my own body as a temple of the Holy Spirit, or do I hurt or harm it by gluttony, chemical addiction, or other abuse?

Do I hate anyone, or am I angry with anyone?

Do I lose my temper or injure my neighbor by thoughts, words, or deeds?

Do I hold grudges or harbor resentment?

Do I ignore the plight of the helpless, or am I callous toward genuine need?